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## Ten Years of the Department of Classics at the University of Silesia in Katowice<sup>1</sup>

The idea of opening the Department of Classics at the University of Katowice appeared for the first time in the early 70-s of the previous century – in fact at the very beginning of the activity of the University, which was founded in 1968 on the basis of the Higher School of Pedagogy and a Branch of the Jagiellonian University. The initiator was Stefan Zabłocki, then an assistant professor, working at the University of Wrocław. The idea was accepted and approved by Jan Kazimierz Zaremba, a professor and a founder of the Faculty of Polish Philology at the Higher School of Pedagogy and the very first few years of the University of Silesia. Unfortunately, the authorities of that time – according to Professor Zabłocki – were against the idea as they did not find classical studies – associated mostly with Christian tradition – either important or useful. The common belief connecting Latin used by the church with classical studies overwhelmed the simple fact that the studies have more to do with pagan and pre-Christian culture rather than the period of Christianity. The idea appeared unacceptable to the board of the Higher School of Education, where most of the top scholars were deeply involved in creating an entirely different image of a newly born University Faculty that was set up in Sosnowiec, where Philology was transferred from Humanities in 1973. A part of that Faculty – with its setting in Katowice – was converted into the Faculty of Social Sciences afterwards.

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<sup>1</sup> This article was presented at a conference organized on the occasion of the ten-year jubilee of Department of Classics at the University of Silesia in Katowice in December 2002 – cf. T. Aleksandrowicz: „Dziesięć lat filologii klasycznej w Uniwersytecie Śląskim w Katowicach”. *Classica Catoviciensia. Scripta Minora* 2002, T. 3, fasc. 2.

Another attempt at bringing the idea into life was made only after political changes had allowed it – in the late 80-s. It was Stefan Zabłocki, a Gdańsk University professor then, who put the idea forward for the second time. The project of setting up a Department of Classics at the University of Silesia was presented to the Dean of the Faculty of Philology in Katowice – Jan Malicki – in Stettin where the two scholars met on occasion of their lectures there. It is worth mentioning that was the second time when a scholar whose field of research was Polish Literature of the Renaissance period, abundant in writers and poets influenced by ancient literature and full of works written in Latin, took interest in the idea. Thanks to the willingness and efforts on both sides Professor Zabłocki was employed at the University of Silesia in 1989 as a half-time working scholar, then a full time member of the university staff. His primary task was to find and select teachers and scholars as well as teaching materials for the future Department of Classics. Danuta Miodyńska, who worked as a Latin lecturer in a University unit – School of Foreign Languages, was a great help to the Professor at that time. In fact the Department of Classics, headed by Professor Zabłocki, was set up and started working on the 1-st of October 1991. Maksymilian Pazdan – University Rector was another well-disposed person, fully understanding and appreciating the need for classical studies at the University. In October 1991 the first scholars started their work: PhD Józef Budzyński and PhD Józef Sieroń. Some time later in March the following year, the classical philology library began to work. A librarian – Wanda Strykowska, a very good professional worker with profound philological knowledge took care of it. Apart from selecting suitable books the main problem was to prepare the Department's policy as to the staff recruitment and co-operation with the neighbouring universities – famous Jagiellonian University and the University of Opole.

The first students could attend their classes at the Philology Department of the University of Silesia in 1992, so it took three years to start the regular courses there. Since then, as the time passed, additional lectures for the students were given by professors from different universities. Professor Joanna Rostropowicz from the University of Opole and Professors Michał Bednarski, Jerzy Styka, Romuald Turasiewicz, Józef Korpanty and PhD Hubert Wolanin from the Jagiellonian University started their regular lectures as well. Professor Zabłocki, whose mother university was still the University of Gdańsk, offered a post at the classical philology to PhD Tadeusz Aleksandrowicz, who gave lectures on the history of ancient culture and led the Latin seminar. He was also appointed for the post of vice-head of the department, which had been held by PhD Józef Budzyński before. The new members of the staff were Tomasz Sapota, graduated from the Jagiellonian University and Łukasz Tofilski from the University of Wrocław. They became full-time employees after they had finished their doctorate studies subsequently in 2000 and 2001. Before that PhD Budzyński was promoted and that was the first remarkable scientific achievement of existing the Department of Classics.

In May 1998 professor Zabłocki ceased coming to the University. His resignation from further work at the University of Katowice was the consequence of his decision as to changing his place of work for Katowice. He refused to change it as he was emotionally involved rather in work and living in Gdańsk than in Katowice. This decision reflects distinctively the character of Professor Zabłocki as well as his ethos. He was the head of the Department for over a decade. This period is undoubtedly the vital period of classical philology, beginning its existence, as far as the most valuable and famous philologists employed are concerned. They eventually were the guarantee of the highest possible level of education in this field and also devoted themselves to work and support the young employees. The tutors of the first doctorate degrees were Professors Alicja Szastyńska-Siemion from the University of Wrocław and Jerzy Styka from the University of Cracow who took care of the promising doctorate studies participants – Tomasz Sapota and Łukasz Tofilski. This policy was maintained afterwards when two new graduates Przemysław Marciniak and Anna Malina were tutored by Professors Romuald Turasiewicz and Józef Korpanty accordingly, both from the Jagiellonian University. Contacts with Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, whose chairman for many years has been Professor Turasiewicz, have also appeared to be extremely fruitful. Five present and previous staff workers of the Department have become members of this prestigious society. Some staff members and doctoral students of the Department take part in research and conferences organised by the academic milieu of Opole, inspired by Professor Joanna Rostropowicz.

After Professor Zabłocki had resigned from work at the University of Silesia, the position was taken by Professor Michał Bednarski from the Jagiellonian University. Some lectures that Professor Zabłocki used to give were taken over by Professor Bruce Duncan MacQueen, who was employed four years ago and lately has joined a newly established university unit – Department of Comparative Literature. However, he is still giving lectures at the Department of Classics.

In 2000 PhD Józef Budzyński decided to retire and he moved to Częstochowa where he got a job at the Higher School of Pedagogy and thus he broke his relationship with the University of Silesia. However, he is still a tutor of Mrs Beata Gaj, a graduate from Jagiellonian University, who started research connected with her doctorate thesis four years ago. Józef Budzyński's decision of changing his place of work was a big loss for the classical philology staff members. New PhD scholars, mentioned above, Tomasz Sapota and Łukasz Tofilski, together with Professor Michał Bednarski strengthened the staff of the Department of Classics. Unfortunately, in September 2002 Professor Turasiewicz, whose merits for development of the Department of Classics were invaluable, decided to cease work at the University of Silesia. His lectures were taken over by Professor Jerzy Styka who has been working again at the Department after a short break.

It is worth mentioning that some lectures for the Classics students were given by Polish Philology Professors – Jan Malicki and Ewa Jędrzejko and also by historian Wiesław Kaczanowicz. The Department of Classics co-operates with High School II of Sosnowiec and especially classical philologist Bogusława Żak, a teacher of Latin, who has been giving lectures on methodology of teaching ancient languages at school for several years now. Among many teachers and scholars who were connected with Department of Classics were MA Danuta Miodyńska, PhD Antoni Dreja and PhD Krzysztof Pawłowski. Thanks to including Theology Faculty into University units students have gained opportunity to study Hebrew and Coptic language. The secretaries of the Department were subsequently Mss Anna Wolańska, Grażyna Pawelek, Bożena Klepek and Danuta Morzycka who has been working for five years now.

Scientific research conducted in the Department of Classics focuses on several different areas such as linguistics, grammar and history of ancient languages, philosophy and literature of ancient Greek and Rome, Byzantine culture, neo-Latin, as well as modern Greek and reception of ancient culture in Europe and Poland. Academic teachers and scholars working in the Department have published eight books<sup>2</sup>, over eighty papers and taken part in fifty-nine national and international conferences on ancient culture so far. They have been members of several academic societies such as Polish Philological Society (PTF), Polish Historical Society (PTH), Polish Linguistics Society, Commission of Classics – a unit of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. Staff members have received scholarships in Rome, London and Vienna four times already with more to come.

Up till now five academic grants have been given to scientists of the Department. Additionally, Przemysław Marciniak, a PhD student, was awarded with a scholarship from the Polish Science Foundation which allowed him to stay in Washington and take part in a conference in Columbus, Ohio, USA. Many lectures given by the classical philologists, especially during PTF and PTH meetings, have contributed significantly to make people in our region aware of ancient world values and intellectual attractiveness of ancient culture. To achieve this goal intensive efforts and willingness to devote time to this kind of scientific activity has been made by most of the scholars. The Polish Historical Society has been of great help in this particular matter, giving opportunity to co-operate and support the philologists.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Sieroń: *Inspiracje filozoficzne w twórczości Wergiliusza*. Katowice 1994; J. Budzyński: *Dramat i teatr szkolny na Śląsku (XVI–XVIII wiek)*. Katowice 1996; idem: *Tradycje literackie i teatralne humanistycznych szkół Śląska od średniowiecza do oświecenia*. Kielce 1996; T. Aleksandrowicz: *Elita władzy a oratorstwo w schyłkowym okresie Rzeczypospolitej Rzymskiej*. Katowice 1996; idem: *Kultura intelektualna rzymskich konsulów w schyłkowym okresie Republiki*. Katowice 2002; M. Bednarski: *Apollonios Dyskolos i jego gramatyka*. Kraków 2000; *Apollonios Dyskolos „O składni”*. Przekład, interpretacja, wstęp M. Bednarski. Kraków 2000; T. Sapota: *Magia i religia w twórczości Lucjusza Apulejusza z Madaury. Studium wpływów orientalnych w kulturze rzymskiej w drugim wieku naszej ery*. Kraków 2001.

Fifteen students every year for the last ten years have been admitted, which amounts to 150 students who took the opportunity to study classics in Katowice. However, only one third of the number – 52 students – has graduated because of several reasons. The main problem for students has proved to be the first year of study which requires both good philological background and hard, systematic work during the term. Some students seemed to have made the wrong decision as to the studies they should have chosen. Others have begun their studies in the Department of Classics to deepen their knowledge – these are mostly history, philosophy, English and French language students and also several from the Faculty of Theology and even students of the Academy of Medicine. Many students who have resigned just passed through studies – staying for several months or terms as they realised it was not their aim to study classics. Thorough and elaborate studies resulting in getting a diploma have proved to be too difficult for those students who would like to achieve a certain level of competency, without acquiring profound knowledge of ancient culture. Thus BA studies seem a very reasonable and convenient solution for them. This two-levelled study course would allow to continue education on the third year and the following for those students who would like to take up further education and devote themselves to scientific research in this field. Another category comprises MISH students (Interdepartmental Individual Studies in the Humanities) who choose the lectures and classes that suit their interest and future university career. None of them have chosen classics as a basic study. It is worth mentioning that several classics graduates have also got a diploma in philosophy and many BA in Italian language.

There have been fifty-two MA theses, among which seventeen concerned Greek literature – Professor Joanna Rostropowicz supervised thirteen of them, Professor Romuald Turasiewicz was the tutor of four. Eight students who wrote their theses in Roman literature were tutored by Professors J. Korpanty, J. Styka, S. Zabłocki, B.D. MacQueen, PhD T. Sapota, three linguistic research studies resulting in MA theses were supervised by Professor M. Bednarski and PhD H. Wolanin. There have been seven neo-Latin theses tutored by PhD J. Budzyński and PhD A. Dreja. Eighteen MA theses concerning ancient culture were tutored by PhD T. Aleksandrowicz.

Classics' graduates who have not been employed in the Department continue their research on different departments of humanities and history as well as the Faculty of Social Sciences – let us mention Zbigniew Kadłubek who has written his PhD thesis in The Polish Philology Institute, Aneta Chmiel – in Italian language, Janusz Kucharczyk in philosophy. Elżbieta Zuba tutored by Professor Rostropowicz and Anna Szczepaniak tutored by a Poznań University Professor Jerzy Danielewicz have begun their research studies in Greek. This year two other classics graduates, Katarzyna Lesiak and Katarzyna Stępień, supervised by Professor M. Bednarski have started their research in linguistics.

It is a common opinion that PhD theses<sup>3</sup> and MA papers, gaining top marks, are far above standard level. Systematic development of study syllabus has definitely influenced this in a great deal. The syllabus is prepared according to international standards where the ECTS system has been applied. To confirm the high level of the studies one should refer to achievements as well as scholarships given by the Ministry of Education to five students of the Department of Classics, as well as several visits our students have paid to Great Britain during the summer courses of Greek and Latin organised there and also German language courses held in Trevir.

Special attention should be paid to The Young Classical Philologists' Society which activity has resulted in giving out the periodical "Pallas Silesia" preceded by a foundation that enabled its edition. It was initially connected with Department of Classics and then it has become a separate academic unit. The Young Classical Philologists' Society has been giving out a periodical "Classica Catoviciensia Scripta Minora" since 2000. The periodical contains texts concerning humanities and is written by both students and scholars dealing with the subject of ancient history, literature and language. "Classica Catoviciensia" will enable young scientists to publish articles and to develop themselves. The Young Classical Philologists' Society organized a conference "Graeca aeterna" and after that published the conference materials.

The Department has put new aims and task to fulfil. The most important one is supplying the staff of the Department of Classics with at least three scholars with higher academic degrees which would enable to apply for accreditation of classical studies. Updating different study facilities such as computerizing the library as well as introducing new studying methods will definitely create new ways to solve problems connected with working conditions and study work, not to mention problems with working space. Post-diploma classical studies seem to be the main source of the income that is supposed to assure means and money for it.

It is very important that these studies will allow, thanks to its income, to meet the demands of educational and scientific goals that have been set as far as deepening knowledge of humanities is concerned. Recent surveys prove to confirm that the study policy is correct. It is, however, a matter of utmost importance to develop much better cooperation with different classical studies centres from abroad in order to exchange experience and discuss different philological problems. Study trips made both by scholars and students yielded some interesting contacts with students and scientists from different university centres across the Europe that are very fruitful.

All in all the Department of Classics, despite many problems and difficulties, has appeared to be successful. The most valuable are achievements of young scho-

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<sup>3</sup> PhD thesis of Ł. Tofiłski was awarded with a special rector's prize.

lars who have been students of our Department. Unfortunately, the sudden death of the founder and first chair Professor Zabłocki is an irretrievable loss<sup>4</sup> and so much regretted is our graduate, Monika Świderek, who died tragically<sup>5</sup>.

Probably there was a chance to do more during this period but it would not necessarily mean the better. Referring to Latin saying *festina lente* one should not definitely understand it as a kind of lazy or tardy way of operating but following the path of diligence and meticulousness which no good philologist could do without. The Department of Classics would not exist and flourish without appreciation and support of the University Rectors – Maksymilian Pazdan and Tadeusz Sławek, as well as the Deans of the Faculty of Philology – Jan Malicki, Tadeusz Miczka and Wiesław Banyś. The vice-Dean, Urszula Żydek-Bednarczuk has also shown to be well-disposed and extremely helpful to the Department. We wish we could always count on such a great help.

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. T. Aleksandrowicz: „Wspomnienie o profesorze Stefanie Zabłockim (1932–2001)”. *Gazeta Uniwersytecka UŚ* 2002, nr 6, pp. 4–5; K. Lesiak: „Wspomnienie o prof. dr hab. Stefanie Zabłockim”. *Classica Catoviensis. Scripta Minora* 2001, T. 2, fasc. 2, pp. 79–80.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. T. Aleksandrowicz: „Magister Monika Świderek (1970–1999)”. *Pallas Silesia* 1999, T. 3, pp. 142–143.

*Tadeusz Aleksandrowicz*

## Dziesięć lat Katedry Filologii Klasycznej w Uniwersytecie Śląskim w Katowicach

### Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono okoliczności powstania Katedry Filologii Klasycznej na Wydziale Filologicznym Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach w roku 1991 oraz jej stopniowy rozwój w pierwszym dziesięcioleciu istnienia. Scharakteryzowano kadrę naukową oraz główne kierunki badań prowadzonych w Katedrze. Omówiono także działalność dydaktyczną prowadzoną w ramach pięcioletnich studiów magisterskich z zakresu filologii klasycznej.



*Tadeusz Aleksandrowicz*

## Zehn Jahre des Lehrstuhls für Klassische Philologie an der Schlesischen Universität in Katowice

### Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Artikel betrifft die Gründung im Jahre 1991 und die allmähliche Entwicklung in den ersten 10 Jahren des Lehrstuhls für Klassische Philologie an der Philologischen Fakultät der Schlesischen Universität in Katowice. Man hat den wissenschaftlichen Kader dargestellt und die wichtigsten durch den Lehrstuhl geführten Forschungen als auch die didaktische Tätigkeit im Rahmen des 5-jährigen Magisterstudiums in der klassischen Philologie besprochen.